

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

SY-04 SCCT-02 A-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

CPR-02 USSS-00 PER-05 OPR-02 NIC-01 EB-11 SIL-01

LAB-06 SAM-01 DRC-01 /123 W
----- 041600

O 271225Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0622

INFO AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT PO

SUBJ: MANHANDLING OF EMBASSY OFFICER

1. AT APPROXIMATELY 2000 HOURS SEPT 26 EMBOFF JAMES EHRMAN WAS ACCOSTED BY GROUP OF FAR-LEFT POLITICAL ACTIVISTS WHILE OBSERVING FORMATION OF MARCHERS GATHERING OUTSIDE OF LISBON AIRPORT TO DEMONSTRATE SOLIDARITY WITH STRIKING TAP (PORTUGUESE NATIONAL AIRLINES) WORKERS.

2. ACTIVISTS DEMANDED IDENTIFICATION, ACCUSED EMBOFF OF BEING CIA AGENT AND FORCED HIM TO MARCH FROM DEMONSTRATION ASSEMBLY POINT TO RALLY SITE IN DOWNTOWN LISBON (APPROX 3.7 MILES).

ACTIVISTS DID NOT APPEAR TO BE PART OF TAP PERSONNEL, AND GROUP FORCIBLY ESCORTING EMBOFF DELIBERATELY SEPARATED HIM FROM MASS OF TAP WORKERS.

3. WHILE SOME MANHANDLING OCCURRED ALONG MARCH ROUTE AND
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PEN AND DRIVER'S LICENSE DISAPPEARED ALONG WAY, EMBOFF

NOT PHYSICALLY INJURED.

4. EMBOFF "INTERROGATED" IN UNORGANIZED FASHION AT VARIOUS POINTS, PRINCIPALLY AT ASSEMBLY AND RALLY SITES. AT FORMER SITE SEVERAL MICROPHONES AND CAMERA LIGHTS PRESENT, POSSIBLY PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT AS WELL. EMBOFF'S DEPARTMENT ID EXAMINED MINUTELY AT RALLY SITE, BUT RETURNED TO HIM.

5. MOST POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS EPISODE OCCURRED AFTER RALLY SITE REACHED. REPRESENTATIVES OF TAP EMPLOYEES PRESENT WERE EMBARRASSED AND CONCERNED AT SITUATION NOT OF THEIR MAKING, AND INTENT ON TERMINATING IT QUICKLY. EMBOFF WAS SEPARATED FROM ACTIVIST GROUP BY TAP PERSONNEL AND ESCORTED OUT OF IMMEDIATE RALLY AREA. ACTIVISTS FOLLOWED, HOWEVER, AND BEGAN VEHEMENT ARGUMENT WITH TAP EMPLOYEE OVER WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WITH "CIA AGENT, SOME ADVOCATING TRIAL BY "PEOPLES COURT". POTENTIALLY SERIOUS SITUATION WAS ENDED BY SUDDEN INTERVENTION OF YOUNG BLACK PORTUGUESE SOLDIER WHO HAPPENED ON SCENE, OBSERVED INCIDENT, AND TOOK CHARGE. SOLDIER, WHO WAS NOT IN UNIFORM, SUCCEEDED IN EXTRICATING EMBOFF FROM CROWD AND DELIVERED HIM TO SAFETY OF NEARBY POLICE PRECINCT STATION.

6. POLICE FORMALLY QUESTIONED EMBOFF AND SOLDIER AT STATION, TAKING DOWN INFORMATION FOR RECORD, AND TOOK HIM TO TRAIN STATION AT MIDNIGHT.

7. NATIONAL MORNING RADIO BROADCASTS ON SEPT 27 GAVE GENERALLY FACTUAL REPORT OF INCIDENT APPARENTLY ON BASIS INFO OBTAINED FROM POLICE AUTHORITIES. EMPHASIS IN RADIO REPORT WAS ON EMBOFF'S STATEMENT THAT HE WAS ONLY CARRYING OUT NORMAL FUNCTIONS OF EMBASSY OFFICER IN OBSERVING WHAT HAPPENING. THIS COMES THROUGH TO AVERAGE PORTUGUESE, WHO EXPOSED TO DAILY ATTACKS ON CIA IN MEDIA, WITH SINISTER OVERTONES. THE MORNING NEWS-PAPERS DID NOT CARRY THE STORY, PROBABLY BECAUSE IT WAS TOO LATE FOR THEIR DEADLINES.

8. THIS MORNING DCM CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTRY SECRETARY-
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GENERAL ANDRESEN TO EXPRESS CONCERN OVER INCIDENT. DCM EXPLAINED OUR DESIRE TO KEEP LOW KEY AND AVOID AN OFFICIAL PROTEST, WHICH WOULD SIMPLY CREATE FURTHER UNNECESSARY AND PROBABLY HARMFUL PUBLICITY FOR BOTH PORTUGAL AND US. WE SUGGESTED THAT IF PORTUGAL COULD MAKE AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT ON THE MATTER NOW, WE COULD PROBABLY FORESTALL SOME EMBARRASSING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS AT THE NOON BRIEF. ANDRESEN UNDERSTOOD

THIS PERFECTLY AND SAID THAT WE COULD STATE THAT
HE ON BEHALF PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT EXPRESSED DEEP
REGRET OVER THE INCIDENT. ANDRESEN ALSO STATED
THAT AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT TO THE PRESS WOULD VERY
LIKELY BE FORTHCOMING FROM THE MINISTRY AS SOON AS
HE ABLE TO CONTACT ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER CAMPINOS
WHO ATTENDING ALL-DAY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING.
IN MEANTIME, US MAY FEEL FREE TO USE ANDRESEN'S
STATEMENT AT NOON BRIEF.
SCOTT

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